

SPECIAL NEWSLETTER No. 4

Report on OEA Special Representative Assembly:

From its Special Representative Assembly held May 14 and 15, the OEA's leadership obtained somewhat less than it asked. Three items of business required the major portion of the Assembly's time. They were (1) political action, (2) a dues increase, and (3) unification.

The OEA's interest in political action stems from recent and current efforts with tax reform and from many other things presently in the legislative hopper which affect education and the educator's welfare. The resolution presented relative thereto follows. It passed resoundingly.

WHEREAS, The Ohio Education Association recognizes that political activity by educators through their professional associations is growing throughout the nation, and

WHEREAS, political decisions made in the political arena are having an increasing effect on the quality of our schools, the teaching profession, and the education of boys and girls, and

WHEREAS, it is essential that candidates of high quality favorably disposed towards education are elected to public office,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the May 1971 Representative Assembly of the Ohio Education Association does hereby declare its intent to form a political action arm consistent with the general guidelines submitted to this Assembly, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that specific guidelines be developed to govern the actual operation of a political action arm with such guidelines to be submitted to the December 1971 Representative Assembly for official approval.

Drastic action concerning the issue of tax reform remains unnecessary. OEA's leadership and its Assembly felt it unwise to pass any resolutions of threats, implied or otherwise, which might jeopardize Governor Gilligan's or similar tax reform programs.

Assurances against loss made to those school districts which under the Gilligan plan of state aid would initially lose state aid money. The assurances came in the promise that a "safe - harmless" clause will be inserted. Cuyahoga County has a number of such districts, and as we know, Shaker is one such district.

The proposed dues increase came in the form of an amendment to the by-laws of OEA. Labeled Proposal One, it asked that dues to OEA be increased to eight mills per dollar times the average teacher salary in Ohio for the previous school year. We presently pay four mills which translated into thirty-three dollars last year. The proposal as written never came to a vote.

From its placement for consideration, considerable parliamentary maneuvering ensued from the floor. After several hours which saw a proposed amendment of six mills go down to defeat and ultimately revive, a six-mill proposal found its way to the ballot. It passed 717 for to 206 against. Seventy-one abstained. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the duly constituted delegates present is required.

As for the issue of unification, it probably had no chance from the beginning. Rural districts seem to favor it. Urban districts having strong locals with high dues were anti. The passage of the two-mill increase in OEA dues, no doubt, sealed its doom. It failed 445 to 480. An attempt was made to amend the original proposal (Proposal Two, and amendment to the by-laws) so that only local education associations and OEA would be unified. This compromise failed to be placed on the ballot because the majority of proponents for unification wanted it "all or nothing."

Rest assured, like it or not, the issue will return. Before the vote was taken, Oliver Ocasek, a highly respected OEA delegate and state senator, eloquently conceded defeat of Proposal Two. He realized that most delegations, as were we, were instructed to vote against it. In conceding, Ocasek pointed out that the major support of education (again, like it or not) will shortly be federal, not state, and that NEA is the professional agency at the root of this transformation. We know that Ohio is far behind since its major support of education come not from local real estate tax. One delegate wryly observed that the states remaining affiliate status are Ohio and the Confederate States of America. The observation, while not accurate since Connecticut also belongs in the fold, has a clear inference. Affiliated states rank toward the bottom when teacher salaries and state supports of education are compared. Yes, the subject of unification will return and return until its very cause for existence has vanished.

Charles W. Hendrickson
For the SHTA delegation
to OEA.

Delegation

1. Sal Fabrizio
2. Chuck Hendrickson
3. Eick Oberdorfer
4. Don Scherer
5. Cam Buckland